

WRITING AND SUBMITTING THE FINAL PROJECT APPLICATION

Step 1 – The Application Form

Step 2 – The Project Narrative

Step 3 – Submitting the Application Packet

Focus on these key questions:

- ♦ What we do,
- ♦ For whom, and
- ♦ For what expected outcome or benefit?

STEP 1 – THE APPLICATION FORM: The form and instructions are posted at <http://www.statelibrary.sc.gov/lsta-forms.html>.

STEP 2 – WRITE THE PROJECT NARRATIVE AND INCLUDE:

1. Project Title
2. Five-Year Plan State Goal and LSTA Federal Purpose
3. Project Purpose
4. Service Need
5. Primary Service
6. Target Group
7. Goals and Objectives
8. Activities Methods and Timeline
9. Partnerships
10. Budget Justification
11. Marketing Plan
12. Evaluation Plan
13. Continuation of Services

THE PROJECT NARRATIVE STEP-BY-STEP

1. **Project Title** – Select a title reflective of the project.
2. **LSTA Five-Year Plan State Goal and Federal Purpose** - Select at least one goal and one purpose that best characterize your project; document your project's relationship to it. (*The complete text of the State Plan is posted at <http://www.statelibrary.sc.gov/docs/related/lstaplan08.pdf>.)*
3. **Project Purpose** – Answers the questions what we do, for whom, and for what expected outcome or benefit.
4. **Service Need** - Describe the need for your project. Focus on the end user, not the inadequacy of financial resources. Focus on the target group's unmet needs. Link the immediate need to some information source that demonstrates the need is real.
5. **Primary Service** - Describe resources, services and/or programs that your project will deliver to meet the identified needs. *See related document: Describing the Primary Service.*
6. **Target Group and Estimated Number** - Describe the target group. Calculate the estimated percentage/likely to be impacted by your project. **DO NOT** cite the total estimated population of a service area or the entire population of a county, town, or state. **Example:** The estimated number for a project designed to serve a specific population, such as children, may be based on that particular group's percentage of the total library service population.
7. **Goal(s) and Objective(s)** are closely related, but a little different. Think about your goal as a long-term target. **Good goals are:** (a) Specific, (b) Measurable, (c) Achievable, (d) Realistic and (e) Time-bound. Most goals will be about changing something or making it better. Your action word should describe what your subject is expected to do. Your goal should describe the outcome you want and the situation that will exist when the goal is accomplished.

Objectives are the components or steps you'll need to achieve your goals. Quantitative **objectives** are preferred, but qualitative objectives may be utilized. **Examples:** *How many workshops are to be conducted? How is the service to be promoted?* **Measurable objectives state** (a) who is involved (*people whose behaviors, knowledge, and/or skills are to change*); (b) the desired outcomes (*intended changes that should result from activities*); (c) the methods, tools or devices (*tests, surveys, data sources*) to be used to measure progress/expected changes; (d) the criteria for success; and (e) when the outcome will occur (*time frame for success*).

- 8. Activities, Methods and Timeline** - Outline activities and identify each in relationship to its objective. Describe methods that will be used to carry out those activities. Describe the available resources for carrying out your project, such as library materials, equipment, facilities, staff, etc.

Include a **timeline** that coincides with the applicable LSTA two-year grant cycle period and that reflects adequate time for successful implementation and project evaluation. **Document critical project events**—include evaluation. The project doesn't have to last the full two years, but must take place sometime during the applicable LSTA grant activity cycle and must be completed by the end of the grant period.

- 9. Partnerships** - This is collaboration between the subgrantee organization and one or more external agencies or organizations for the mutual benefit of all the participants. Partnerships may be formal or informal. Describe the procedures that will be used to involve library users, potential users and other collaborative partners (e.g., local community groups or local school districts). Vendors and similar entities that are paid for services/products are not partners. **If partnership development is not suitable for your project, briefly explain why.**

10. Budget documentation and justification:

- ♦ Show the total cost of your project (this is the sum of the requested LSTA funds plus your matching funds—34% per LSTA requirements).
- ♦ Include funds from all sources.
- ♦ Specify exact amounts for cash vs. in-kind (*value of goods/services to be provided by the applicant*).
- ♦ Provide a detailed listing by source of funds of all anticipated project expenditures (e.g., personnel, library materials, equipment, etc.) or include corresponding descriptive documentation.
- ♦ For equipment, include the name of the item, the number of items to be purchased, the estimated per unit cost of each item and the total cost or include corresponding descriptive documentation. **Note:** *Items of equipment costing \$5,000 or greater with more than one year of usable life require prior approval by IMLS and the SC State Library.*

11. Marketing Plan - Describe the specifics for promoting your LSTA award and for promoting the services, resources and/or programs made possible by LSTA funds. Incorporate major marketing activities into the project timeline. IMLS requires public acknowledgement of all project activities supported by LSTA funds. Acknowledgement must be present on all related publications, web pages and must be given orally at any related promotional events. *(See related guidance document, "Publicizing Your Award and Your LSTA Funded Project.")*

12. Evaluation Plan - Describe the process(s) that will be used to obtain outcomes and outputs that document how well your LSTA project has met its goals and objectives and how it has benefited your target population.



Guidance on evaluation has been prepared by IMLS and is available at <http://www.imls.gov/applicants/learning.shtm>. Also see <http://www.statelibrary.sc.gov/obe.html> for links to IMLS OBE PowerPoint presentations. Much of the information that follows is based on IMLS guidance documents.

Include a description of methodologies to be used to obtain outcomes such as:

- survey(s),
- pre- and post-test(s) given in training, or
- other systematic measures of intended outcomes

Include a description of methodologies to be used to obtain statistical data or outputs. Outputs are almost always numbers. Examples:

- products created or delivered,
- people served,
- activities and services carried out, etc.

Traditional methods document productivity—resources used, people served, services provided.

- ♦ **Input measures** quantify the resources that libraries have available to provide library services, e.g., size of collection.
- ♦ **Output measures** quantify what libraries actually produce with the inputs, e.g., number of hits on a library's web site.

Statistics tell only a part of the story. The key is to combine customer satisfaction measures with input and output measures. **Whenever applicable, outcome based evaluation (OBE) is the preferred evaluation method.** OBE documents success in terms of the benefits created for individuals (change in the target audience's skills, knowledge, behavior, attitude, status or life condition brought about in part by experiencing the project). Outcomes are the "people" or what happened because of the outputs; outcomes may be defined as benefits to people. **If OBE is not suitable for your project, briefly explain why.**

How does outcome based evaluation (OBE) fit libraries?

- ♦ OBE changes focus from activities to benefits.
- ♦ OBE shows what results one project achieved for its audience.
- ♦ OBE identifies observations that can credibly demonstrate change or desirable conditions.
- ♦ OBE shows to what extent a program met its goals.
- ♦ OBE measurement helps communicate the value and quality of work of libraries.

TIP!

A program may have many outcomes: immediate, intermediate and long term. Pick a few important outcomes to measure.

The four most common categories of messages about libraries and models for collecting information that typically supports them are shown below:

Message	Evaluation Strategy
How Much We Do	Inputs and outputs: statistics, gate counts, Web use logs, and other measures of quantity and productivity
How Well We Do It	Customer satisfaction, quality benchmarks, rankings
What Good We Do/Why We Matter	Outcomes measurement, impact assessment
How Much We Cost/What We're Worth	Return on investment and cost: benefit calculations

YOUR ACTION PLAN

- ♦ Discuss benefits to your library or organization
- ♦ Get more information
- ♦ Consider how to apply OBE
- ♦ Develop a plan

- 13. Continuation of services resulting from your LSTA project** - Describe your plans for continuing the project's services, resources and/or programs without LSTA funds. If you anticipate applying for additional LSTA funds to implement or create a totally new phase of your project, briefly explain.

STEP 3 – SUBMIT THE APPLICATION PACKET

Original signature copies are required for all LSTA forms

Send application packet

to

Guynell Williams, LSTA Coordinator

SC State Library, P.O. Box 11469

Columbia SC 29211-1469

LSTA narrative reports may be sent to

gwilliams@statelibrary.sc.gov

NOTE: The SC State Library will request additional information and supportive documentation as needed.